



Urban Habitats

Nature Focus is run by the conservation team each year and consists of a programme of events and activities centred round an ecological theme. The theme rotates every year between a species, a habitat and Shared Learning, where staff have the opportunity to offer training to, or receive training from, our environmental partners. This year, the theme is **urban habitats**.

As the population of the UK grows, so does the demand for housing and associated infrastructure increases. This has caused our towns and cities to expand into previously undeveloped areas of countryside, swallowing up valuable habitats for wildlife. But the news is not all bad.

Why Urban Habitats?

Urban areas themselves provide valuable habitats for a variety of different species, many of which depend on specific aspects of the built environment. Buildings, outbuildings, urban greenspaces and gardens are all used by the wildlife dwelling in our towns and cities. Buildings are an important part of the urban landscape for bat and bird species.

Greenspaces and urban parks are great spots for wildlife. Trees and hedgerows in parks can be used by wildlife as corridors, allowing species to disperse from one area of suitable habitat to another. As trees get older, the deadwood within them provides food for many specialist insects. Ponds act as breeding sites for newts, frogs and toads and are also home to a variety of plantlife.

You can help the wildlife on your doorstep by making your garden wildlife-friendly. There are lots of ways to do this, from creating habitat piles, putting out bird feeders, composting your garden waste and building nest boxes for birds and bats and hibernation homes for hedgehogs. Over the winter period, food for garden birds is less readily available and so putting out food will help them to survive the cold weather, and allow you to do a spot of bird watching from the comfort of your own home.

How to Find Out More

Amongst the events planned this year are a wildlife photography competition, an urban bat walk, a moth night and talks on all aspects of urban habitats, including the importance of buildings for wildlife and getting to know the plants in your pond.